

CLAIMS:

1. A communications system comprising at least one beacon device capable of wireless message transmission and at least one portable device capable of receiving such a message transmission, wherein the beacon is arranged to broadcast a series of inquiry messages each in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first communications protocol, wherein the beacon is further arranged to add to each inquiry message prior to transmission an additional data field, and wherein the at least one portable device is arranged to receive the transmitted inquiry messages and read data from said additional data field, the additional data field including location information.
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2. A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the beacon is arranged to add said additional data field at the end of a respective inquiry message.
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3. A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the beacon is arranged to include an indication in one of said predetermined data fields, said indication denoting the presence of said additional data field.
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4. A system as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said first communications protocol comprises Bluetooth messaging.
5. A system as claimed in claim 4, wherein a special Dedicated Inquiry Access Code (DIAC) is used to indicate the presence of location information in the additional data field.
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6. A system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the presence of location information in the additional data field is indicated with header information appearing in the additional data field.
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7. A system in accordance with claim 1, wherein wireless messaging system employs frequency hopping, and further wherein location data is sent on each frequency used for inquiry message broadcasts.

5 8. A mobile communication device for use in the system of Claim 1, the device comprising a receiver capable of receiving a short-range wireless inquiry message including a plurality of data fields according to a first communications protocol, means for determining when an additional data field including location information has been added to said plurality of data fields, 10 and means for reading the location information data from such an additional data field.

9. A device as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the receiver is configured to receive messages according to Bluetooth protocols.

15 10. A beacon device capable of wireless message transmission and for use in a communications system comprising said beacon device and at least one portable device capable of receiving such a message transmission, wherein the beacon is configured to broadcast a series of inquiry messages 20 each in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first communications protocol, and to add to each inquiry message prior to transmission an additional data field, such as to enable the at least one portable device arranged to receive the transmitted inquiry messages to read data from said additional data field, the additional data field including location 25 information.

11. A method for enabling the user of a portable communications device to receive broadcast messages wherein at least one beacon device broadcasts a series of inquiry messages each in the form of a plurality of predetermined data fields arranged according to a first communications protocol, wherein the beacon adds to each inquiry message prior to transmission an additional data field carrying broadcast message data 30

including location information, and wherein the portable device receives the transmitted inquiry messages including the location information and reads the broadcast data from said additional data field.

5 12. A method as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the beacon adds said additional data field at the end of a respective inquiry message.

10 13. A method as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the beacon includes an indication in one of said predetermined data fields, said indication denoting the presence of said additional data field.

14. A method as claimed in Claim 11, wherein said first communications protocol comprises Bluetooth messaging.

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